

Economic, Political and Social Identity in the European Union

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Lecture 5

Identity and European Union 'Core Values'

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Additional reading/source:

Van Doth, J. W. (2009) “The ‘Good European Citizen’:
Congruence and Consequences of Different Points of
View”, *European Political Science*, Vol. 8, No. 2,
pp.175-189

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1. Briefly identify some of the ‘core values’ that underpin the European Union
2. Examine ‘the culture’ of those values and beliefs – the ‘culture’ underpinning them
3. Has the acceptance of the ‘culture’ of those core values drawn the E.U. member states closer together – thereby drawing the E.U. citizens closer together, towards a common E.U. identity?

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1. The 'core values' that underpin the E.U.

- a shared set of ideas and values based on liberal democracy;

- democracy
- the rule of law
- peace and security
- economic stability and prosperity
- respect for human rights and minority rights
- diversity and tolerance

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- to promote and develop a European Union culture based upon the ‘European ideal’ (the ‘idea of Europe’)
- the cultural representation of the ‘European idea’ is seen as the ‘cement’ that binds together the different groups of citizens in the E.U. member states – so that ‘cement’ ultimately produces a citizen E.U. identity

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2. The culture underpinning the values and beliefs of the 'European idea'

“The world of culture cannot remain outside the process of completion of the big European internal market: that process demands the formation of a true European culture area”

(European Commission Report, 1988)

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“It is an experiment whose results are of universal significance, an attempt to establish between States the same rules and codes of behaviour that enabled primitive societies to become peaceful and civilised”

(Pascal Fontaine, *A Citizen's Europe*, European Commission, 1993)

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“We are not forming coalitions between States but union among peoples”

(Jean Monnet)

- a *‘People’s Europe’*

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In the past traditions such as:

- Roman law;
- Greek philosophy and science;
- Christian theology
- Renaissance and Enlightenment traditions;
 - have ‘travelled’ across the European continent to produce a ‘European culture-area’ or ‘family of cultures’

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“The idea of a man without a nation seems to impose a strain on the modern imagination ... A man must have a nationality as he must have a nose and two ears. All this seems obvious, though, alas, it is not true. But that it should have come to seem so very obvious is indeed an aspect, perhaps the very core, of the problem of nationalism. Having a nation is not an inherent attribute of humanity, but it has now come to appear as such.”

(Ernest Gellner, 1983)

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3. An 'imagined E.U. community' based on common citizen identity?

- 'agents of European consciousness'
- forces and objects through which knowledge of the E.U. is embodied and communicated as a socio-cultural phenomenon
- 'actors', actions, artefacts, bodies, institutions, policies and representations (symbols) that singularly or collectively engender awareness and promote acceptance of the 'European idea'.

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‘Agents of E.U. consciousness’ range from the abstract to the concrete;

- from:*
- E.U. institutions and civil servants
 - the Single Market and the Euro
 - the metric system of weights and measures
 - E.U. laws and regulations
- to:*
- educational exchanges
 - town-twinning
 - invented Euro-symbols and traditions
 - European Union history
 - the harmonisation of E.U. statistics by the Eurostat office

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“Nationalism is not the awakening of nation-states to self-consciousness; it invents them where previously they did not exist.” (*Ernest Gellner*)

- the emergence of the link between ‘*imagining*’ the State and nation, cultural politics and the formation of political identities
- consciousness of citizen identity arises through the medium of culture and communication – the communication of that identity and what it means/represents

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- Symbols do not simply represent political reality, *they actively create it.*
- *'created'* public symbols for the E.U., i.e.:
 - the E.U. flag, with circle of stars
symbolising European unification
 - the E.U. anthem ('Ode to Joy')
 - European Union passport
 - the Euro